



The Preserve America Initiative

Preserve America is an Administration initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the initiative include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities. Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States, is the Honorary Chair of Preserve America. Detailed information on all aspects of this initiative can be found at www.preserveamerica.gov. Major components of the Preserve America initiative include the following:

Preserve America Presidential Awards

Four awards are given annually to organizations, businesses, and government entities for exemplary accomplishments in the sustainable use and preservation of cultural or natural heritage assets; demonstrated commitment to the protection and interpretation of America's cultural or natural heritage assets; and integration of these assets into contemporary community life, combining innovative, creative, and responsible approaches to showcasing historic local resources.

The winners of the 2007 Preserve America Presidential Awards were announced at a Rose Garden ceremony May 9, 2007. The awardees were the History Channel-Save Our History nationwide program; Downtown St. Louis Revitalization, Missouri; USS *Midway* Museum, San Diego, California; and Natchitoches-Cane River Region Heritage Tourism Initiative, Louisiana. The nomination deadline for the 2008 award cycle is November 1, 2007.

Preserve America Communities

This program recognizes and designates communities, including neighborhoods in large cities, that protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization, and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs. Since the program began, Mrs. Bush has designated 522 communities (including nine neighborhoods) as Preserve America Communities in all 50 states and one U.S. territory.



Jonesborough, Tennessee, became a Preserve America Community in August 2005 and showcases its history as the oldest town in the state.

Benefits of designation include White House recognition; eligibility to apply for Preserve America Grants; a certificate of recognition; a Preserve America Community road sign; authorization to use the Preserve America logo on signs, flags, banners, and promotional materials; listing in a Web-based Preserve America Community directory; inclusion in national and regional press releases; official notification of designation to state tourism offices and visitors bureaus; and enhanced community visibility and pride. There are four quarterly deadlines annually on March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. Application forms are available at www.preserveamerica.gov/communities.html.

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Preserve America Grants

The 2007 federal budget contained approximately \$5 million for grants to support community efforts to demonstrate sustainable uses of their historic and cultural sites and the economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism. The application period for the first round of Preserve America Grants in 2007 closed in February; 43 winners were announced on July 12, 2007, for a total of \$2.6 million. A second round had a June deadline with winners expected to be announced in September 2007. The president's budget requests \$10 million for grants in FY 2008.

The program does not fund bricks-and-mortar projects, but rather complements the Save America's Treasures grant program by helping local communities develop sustainable resource management strategies and sound business practices for the continued preservation and use of heritage assets. State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, designated Preserve America Communities, and Certified Local Governments that have applied for Preserve America Community designation are eligible to apply for Preserve America Grants. A total of 68 grants were given in 2006, the first year of the program. Further information is available at www.cr.nps.gov/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica.

Preserve America History Teacher of the Year Award

Mrs. Bush presented the third annual Preserve America History Teacher of the Year award on October 5, 2006, to Gerry R. Kohler of Parkersburg, West Virginia, at a ceremony at Lincoln Hall in the Union League Club, New York City. Mrs. Kohler was selected from a group of finalists from each state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, who each received \$1,000 and a core archive of history materials for his or her school library. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History facilitates this award program.

Educational Outreach

Preserve America has worked with the History Channel's Save Our History initiative to create a teacher's manual with lesson plans and volunteer ideas to involve students in preserving historic sites in their communities. In addition, Mrs. Bush has prepared three public service announcements on the importance of preserving America's heritage that first appeared in 2004 and are continuing to air.

Executive Order 13287: "Preserve America"

Signed by President Bush on March 3, 2003, this Executive Order complements the Preserve America initiative. The order establishes federal policy to provide leadership in preserving America's heritage by actively advancing the protection, enhancement, and contemporary use of the historic properties owned by the federal government. The order also encourages agencies to seek partnerships with state, tribal, and local governments and the private sector to make more efficient and informed use of these resources for economic development and other recognized public benefits. In addition, it directs the secretary of commerce, working with other agencies, to use existing authorities and resources to assist in the development of local and regional heritage tourism programs that are a significant feature of many state and local economies. As required by the order, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation delivered the first report on implementation of Section 3 to the president on February 15, 2006. See www.preserveamerica.gov for the full report.

The White House is working with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Transportation, the General Services Administration, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the President's Council on Environmental Quality, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to implement Preserve America. For more information about the initiative and its programs, visit www.preserveamerica.gov.

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